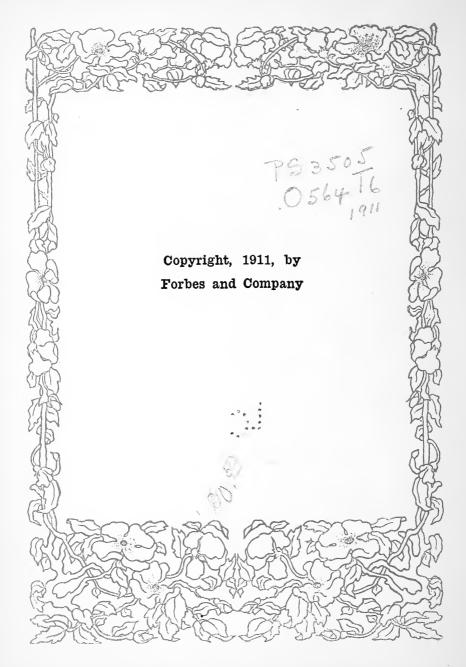




MARJORIE BENTON COOKE

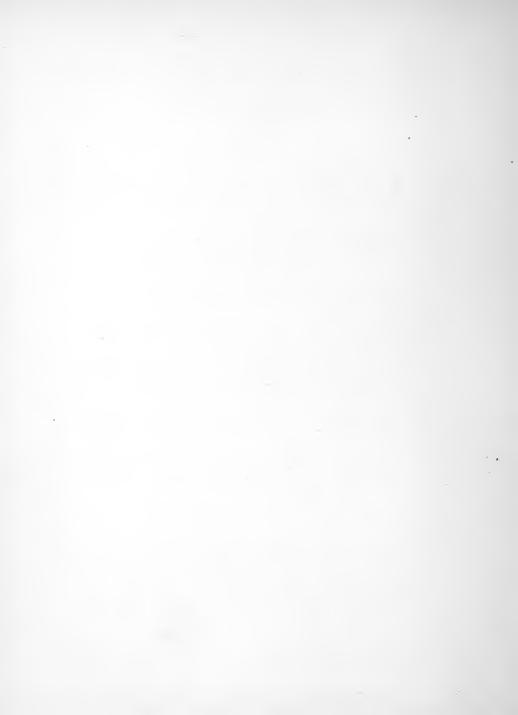


CHICAGO FORBES & COMPANY 1911



€ CI.A294743

TO MOTHER



I

O H, lend me, Ariel, thy filmy wing, That I may tread the pathways of the sky,

Peep through the fingers of the dawn, and try

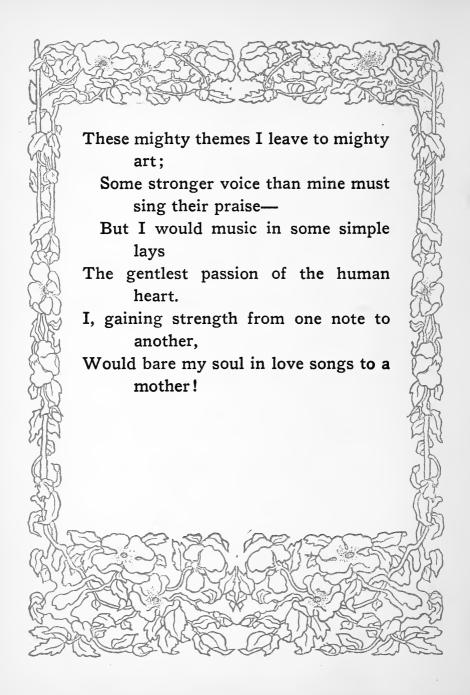
To teach my Muse new vistas, ere I sing.

I'd chant no marching song for warrior's feet,

No "Laus Deo" shall my voice intone,—

I would not, with its murmurs and its moan,

Transcribe the motley music of the street—





SOFT like a dusky veil night settles down.

O ye dead souls of poets up in Heav'n,

Lend me the art that unto you was given,

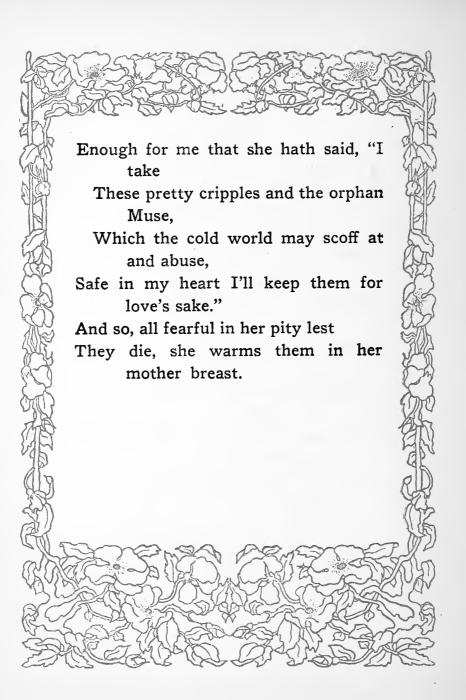
To polish gems more fitting for her crown.

Alas, my little verses weakly try

To soar above, but flutt'ring vainly, beat

And drop, like homing love-birds at her feet,

'Neath the divine compassion of her eye.





F on this path which leads from dark to light,

You meet one soul who knows and understands,

Who sees the work you mean to do, demands

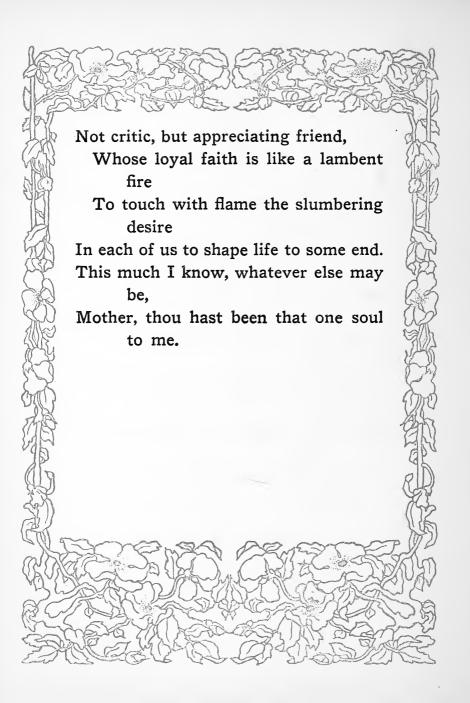
That you live up to what in love's clear sight

You're meant to be—what matters else beside?

Others may chance along your road, and praise,

Or scoff and scorn, then go their various ways—

Your one soul stays, content but to abide



IV

LOOK into the quaintly pictured face,

My mother's face when she was but a child—

So pale, so sad, so delicately styled, The smitten poet of a stricken race.

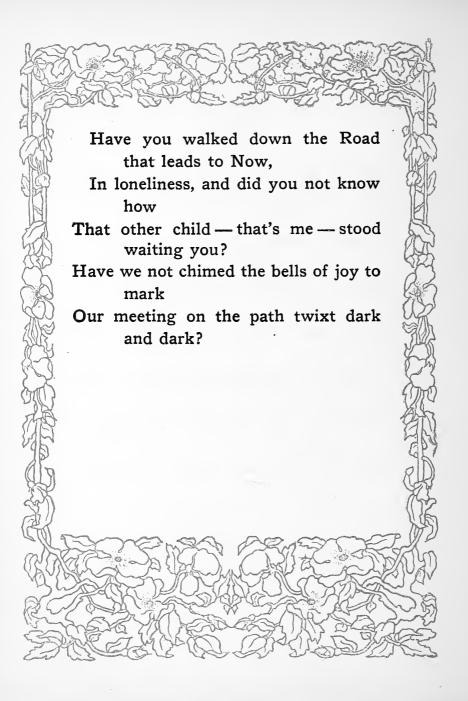
Her eyes, like two deep pools of sapphire light,

Reflecting naught of sunshine or of day—

No childish joyousness, but all the gray

Mysterious shadows of the dusk or night.

O little child, with eyes of tear-dimmed blue,





THE day is drear and misery is keen,
I live beneath the shadow of your
frown—

Harsh words were spoken no regrets can drown,

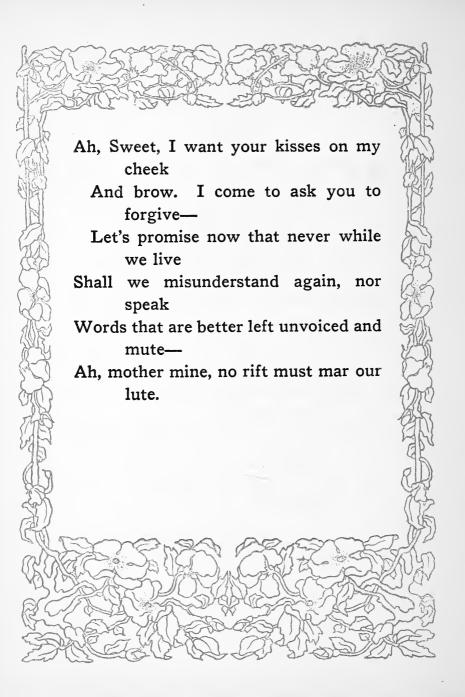
And we are silent, with our pride between.

'Twas such a little word that made the sting,

Yet with the stillness how it grows apace,

Until it fills the room and all of space,

Leering at us, like some misshapen thing.





H^{AND} locked in hand, we came upon a place

Where two roads branched from off the one we walked;

And Disappointment on the new path stalked

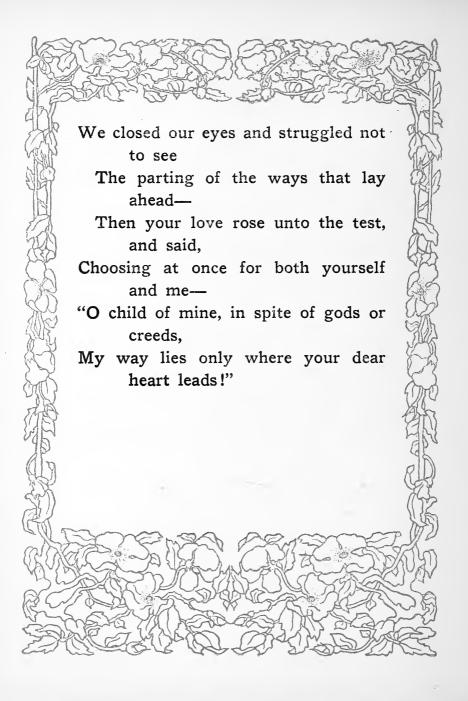
Toward one of us, as we stood face to face,

Each knowing well the way the heart desired,

Each seeing what the choice must needs demand,

Both vowing that we'd still go hand in hand,

No matter how the heartless fates conspired.





F some old friend, to reminiscence stirred,

Fingering the treasures of my mem'ry room,

Should come upon a bier, all hung with gloom,

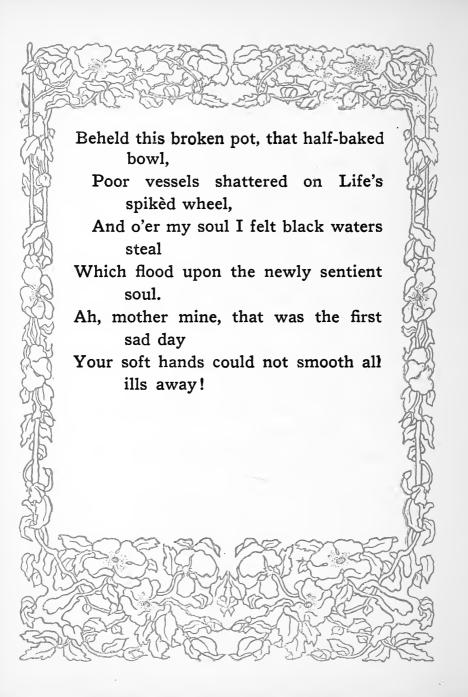
And whisper softly, "Who lies here interred?"

I'd lift that dead day from its resting place—

It marked the hour I stepped from Childhood's land,

And with the wet clay of my life in hand

I gazed into the Future's veiled face,-





I F then my friend should chance to ask of me

What day was filled the fullest to the brim

With joy, I should not need to answer him

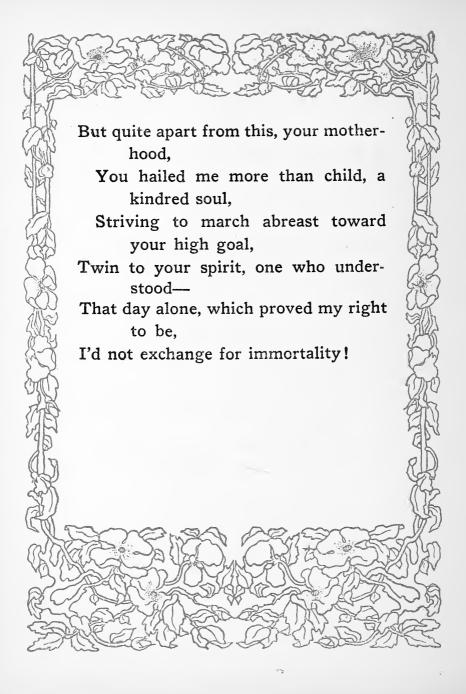
After long searching in my memory.

I'd cry it out so that your heart might hear,

'Twas when you made me feel first, one white morn,

I was not just your child, whom you had borne,

Reared unto womanhood, and so held dear,—





M ISERY to-day unveiled her face to me,

And in her arms she held a dream of mine,

Long cherished at my inmost secret shrine;

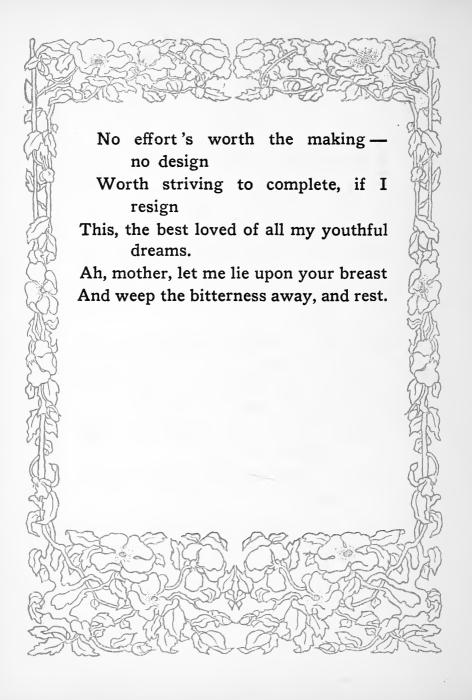
And now, still-born, she held it me to see.

I cried aloud in agonized surprise, That I, exempt till now, must be bereft,

And all despoiled and stripped should thus be left

To read the mockery in Misery's eyes.

The world lies all in shadow, and it seems



X

PERHAPS there may be in the Afterwhile

Some spirit-elf wrought all of joy and light,

To touch eyes, dimmed with weeping, to new sight—

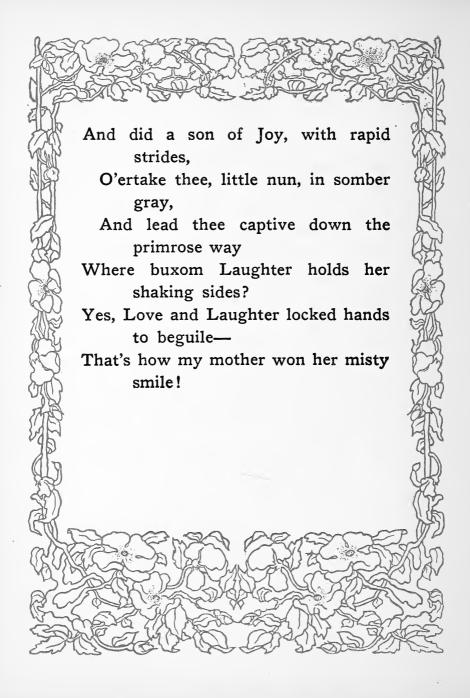
To teach lips set in sadness how to smile.

For some there be, ill-destined from their birth

To march lock-step in Sorrow's motley train,

While past them wind, a-singing through the rain,

Those wassailers, the chosen few of Mirth.





THE robin trills again his care-free song,

The sun shines, and the sky is radiant blue;

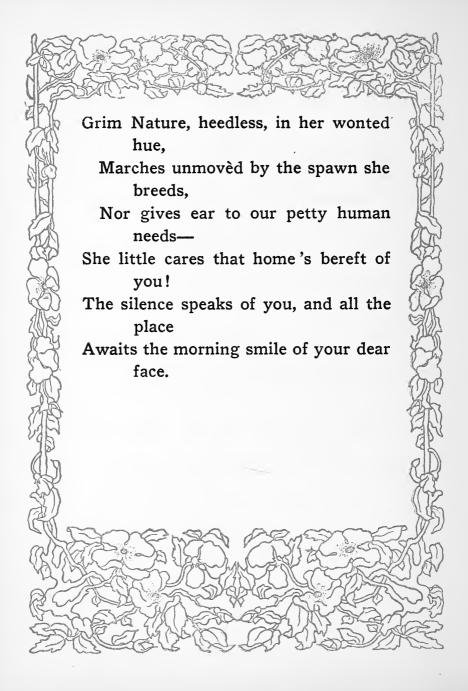
The universe doth feel no loss of you,

Nor mark my sighing that the day is long!

I'd have the rain veil morn in scarfs of gray,

I'd have her mute the robin's ecstasy,
I'd bid the wind sigh in a minor
key—

Does Earth not know that you have gone away?





SUMMER—blue skies—and sunshine everywhere,

The blessing of the mid-year's joyous days,

And then the benediction Autumn lays

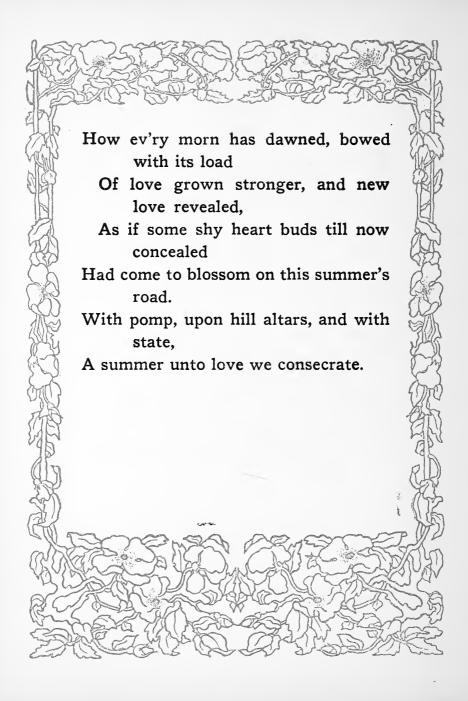
On field and forest and on meadows fair.

Thus have we watched the pageant and the show—

With thirsty lips at Mother Nature's cup

We've quaffed renewal, and with ev'ry sup

Reluctance that these sweet calm days must go.





THIS would I, Muezzin-like, cry from my tow'r—

Calling the world to hearken and to pray

That men might learn this credo day by day,—

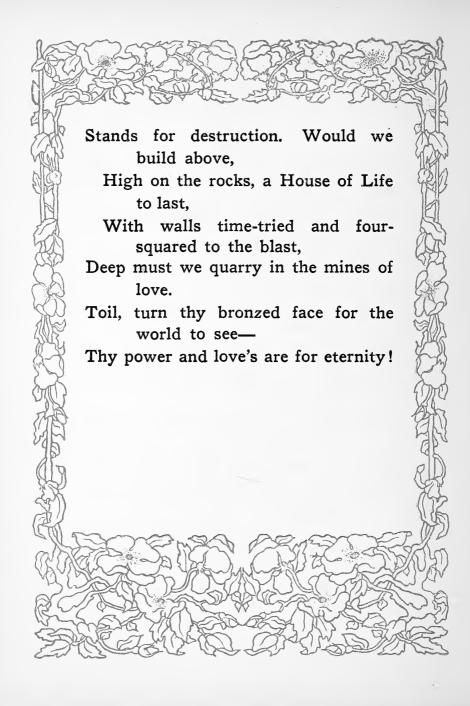
The dignity of work, love, and its pow'r.

If some Redeemer might cast out again
The money - changers, make the

temple clean,

Teach us that work well done is never mean,

Make clear to us that hate brings only pain,





ATHING apart life seems among the pines—

Our cares, like last year's thoughts, are laid away;

Unto its peaceful end rounds out each day,

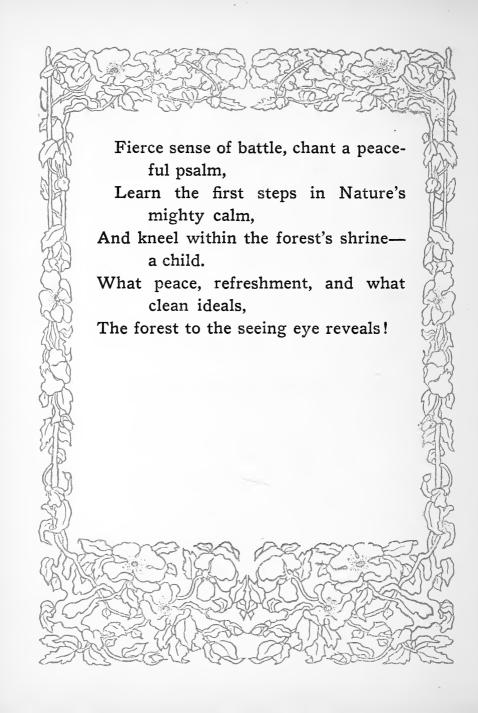
And fades, like to a shadow that declines.

Or is this life, in all its plenitude,

Within this temple which the pines do shape,

Where trivial things dare not grimace nor gape

Full in the face of Nature's magnitude?
Would we might cast out for all time
the wild





D^{ID} ever travellers in the golden age,

Seeking the shrines where some longdead saints rest,

Know half the ardor or the joy of quest

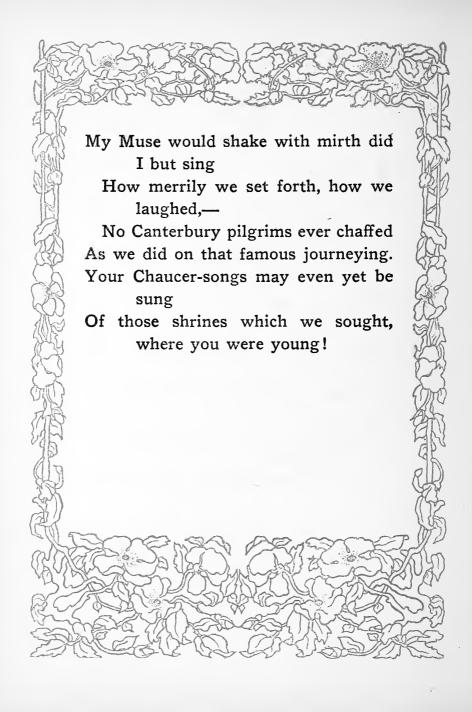
With which we fared on our first pilgrimage?

What ecstasies of planning, and what days

Of dreaming of the pleasures held in store,

And how like children we peeped through the door

Which leads into Adventure's gay highways!





WONDER if, in some dim world beyond,

Whither our steps may lead us some glad day,

There will be heart-speech, or some simple way

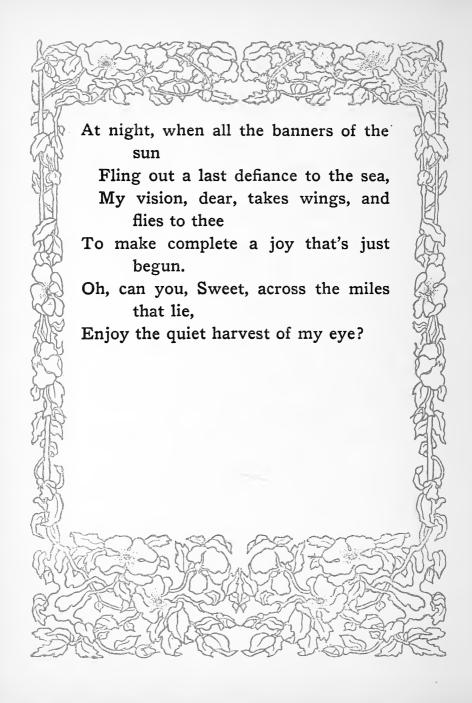
That soul may call, companion soul respond?

When all the silent heralds of the dawn

Tiptoe across the hushed world's eastern rim,

Or when upon the moor, windswept and grim

Some revelation flashes, and is gone;





SEE them sometimes upraised, as in prayer,

Or loosely clasped, a-weary with much toil;

I watch them as they deftly twist and coil

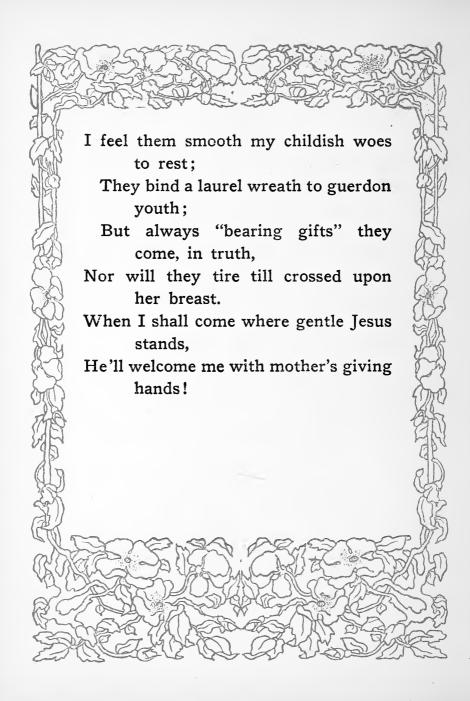
The smooth bands of her silken soft gray hair;

I mark them as they fold and stitch and sew.

What days and weeks, aye, years, those hands have seamed,

Since first above her baby's clothes she leaned,

And wove her mother-dreams so long ago!





THESE later years have bound upon thy back

Fardels of suff'ring which have bent thee low,

Halted thy steps, and made thy progress slow,

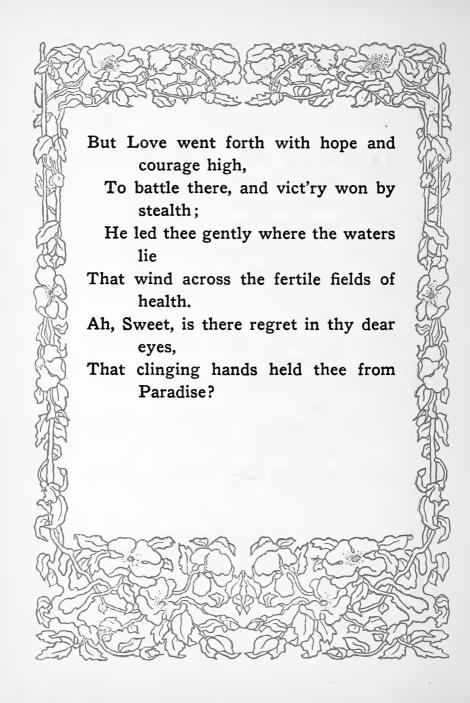
Though staff and helping hand thou didst not lack.

The days, like hills, stretched off to Heaven's gate,

Each peak a pinnacle of poignant pain,

And at the base, run riot with nightbane,

Lo, Death, grim Watcher, lurked and lay in wait.





BACK from the very brink of the Black Stream,

Turning from Charon's friendly outstretched hand,

You came back from the edge of No-Man's Land,

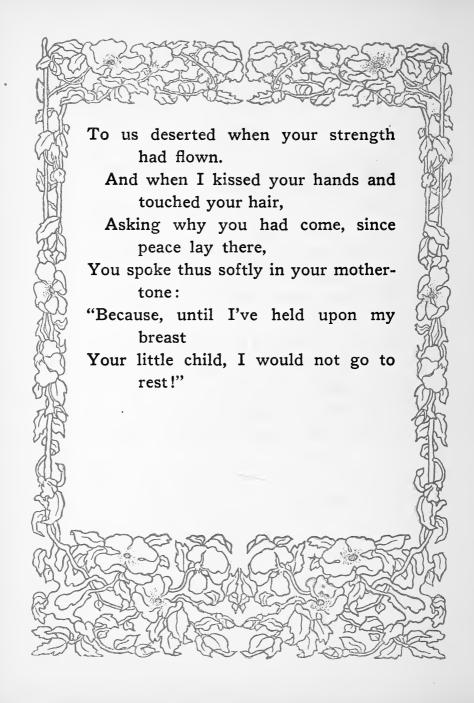
As one who groped her way from out a dream.

Up the steep side each traveller descends,

Who seeks the river Lethe at the base,

You resolutely turned your dear white face,

And struggled back to life, to make amends





WHEN the gray Summoner halts somewhere near,

Next door, perchance, and raps with fingers light,

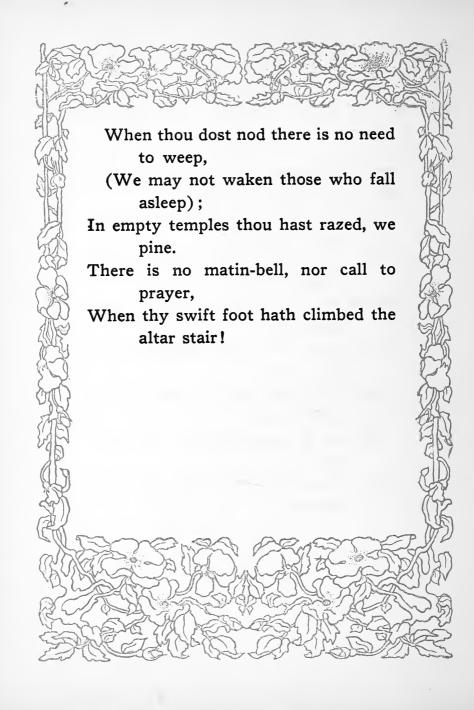
And beckons, how we close our casement tight,

To cower each within our House of Fear!

We try to think of him in gentle guise, As Christ returned again, God's only Son,

Or Mary, beggared of her little one, Seeking new babes to fondle, motherwise.

O Death, thou desecrator of each shrine,





THE red-tongued flame leaps round our hearth-log fast,

The bark splits, and the tree's white heart lies bare;

A stalwart Cæsar of the peaks sprawls there,

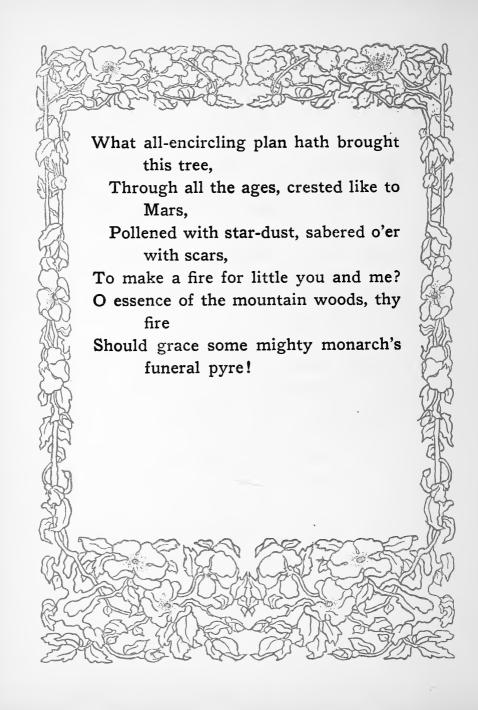
While all the legions of his years march past.

The lawless wind that sweeps across the world.

Hath scourged his branches with its mighty flail—

Decades of storm assaulted with their gale—

The taloned eagle round his crest hath whirled.





I WOULD not have my life blaze like the sun,

To light the world and dazzle with its glare;

I'd rather be the flow'r in Night's dark hair—

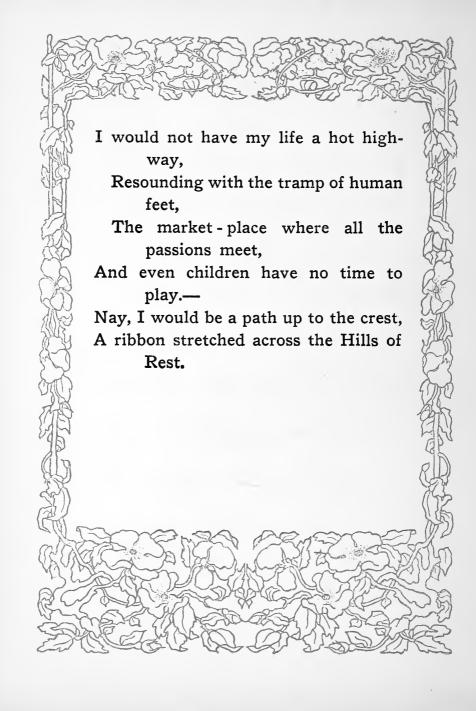
The twilight star, that shines when day is done.

I would not have my life a river, mired With ships of many cargoes, and

much gold;

I'd rather be the mountain brook—the cold,

Clear waters of refreshment for the tired.





F you would seek the trail to that domain

Where Joy and Laughter reign in joint estate,

Where Care slips from your shoulders as the late

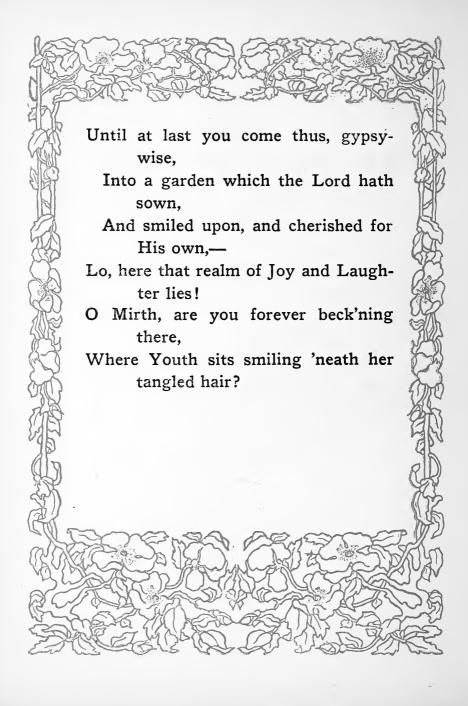
Drought flees the tapping fingers of the Rain—

Just strap your knapsack to your back, and fare

Across the yellow desert sands that lie

Beyond those temple-pillars of the sky,

The Rockies—tow'ring through the ages there—





HEARKEN, O Keeper of the Keys of Heav'n,

To me, a beggar at the outer gate.

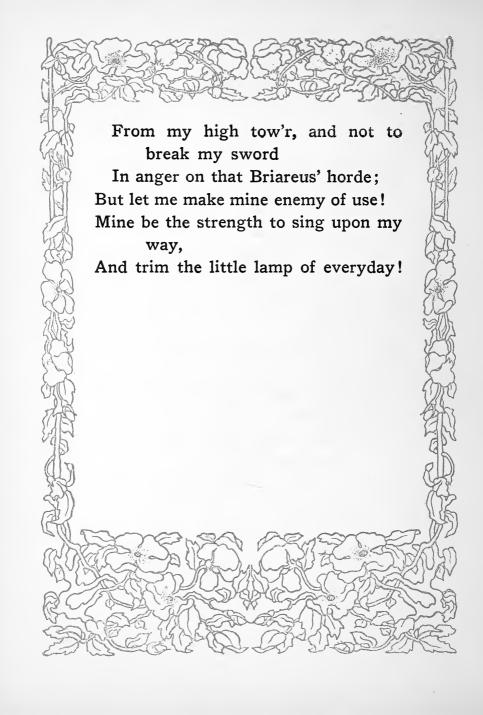
I crave not wealth, success, nor high estate—

Grant me the patience of the Virgins Seven!

For life's great crises strength springs up full-armed,—

Undaunted I can grapple the unseen;
But, oh, the nagging army of routine
Which marches past my bulwarks, all
unharmed.

Oh, teach me how to fly the flag of truce





DEAR HEART, whose love I have been blessed with so,

Whose ev'ry dream has been for my poor sake,—

If, in the end, each one of us might take

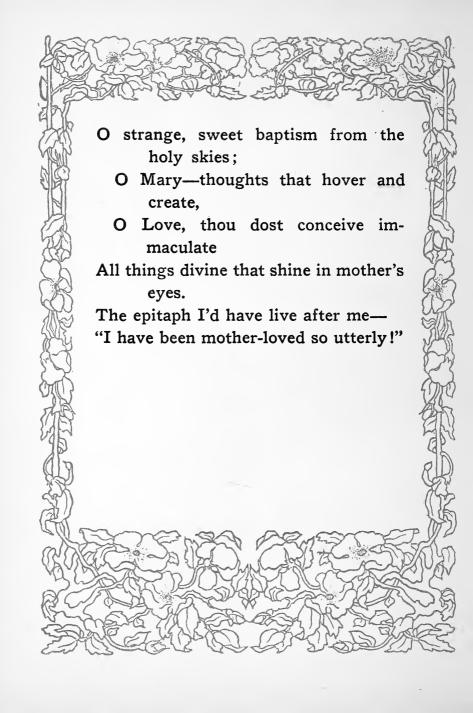
His choicest treasure into Heav'n, I know

How rich I'd be accounted, who could bear

The white wand of your love to show to God,

High o'er my head, like to the bloss'ming rod

Of Aaron, lifted on the summer air.





441 8 1911

•

17 1 a.

One copy del. to Cat. Div.

AUG 17 1911

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

0 018 604 907 A